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The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

Theodore A. Gill:

Toward an Earthy Church

Orva Lee Ice • The Test in Protestantism

Benjamin E. Shove • Self-Righteousness

James Wm. Morgan • Priesthood of All Believers

Kendig Brubaker Cully • Antidote to Nothingness

HERBERT STROUP

COUNSELING COLLEGE STUDENTS

Their Characterization in Recent Fiction

(First of Three Parts)

VOL. XXXII, No. 10 OCTOBER 1961

The Pulpit

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PULPIT POST

But He Did

SIR: *Who* and Paul? I rise to the defense of Herman Melville. I heartily concur with the comments concerning the Apostle Paul in your July editorial, but I have difficulty recognizing the novelist by the sketch which you have given us. You cite the lantern held aloft at sea by Queequeg "in the heart of that almighty forlornness" and say: "That, says Melville, is man. . . ." But did you not in the preceding sentence quote Melville's own comment that Queequeg sat thus as "the sign and symbol of a man *without faith*"? (Italics mine.)

Is it an accident that Melville contrasts his Captain Ahab with the unforgettable preacher in chapters VIII and IX? And *Moby Dick* is by no means the only thing that Melville wrote. You may say if you like that this author of *Typee* and *Omoo* led a "placid" life, especially in his early years. But to stress an affinity to Thomas Hardy is no less debatable than to assert — as one might — Melville's affinity to the author of the Book of Job. As one who has found Christian insights and symbolism in both the poetry and the masterful prose of Melville, I regret to think that his potential readers might be turned away by your statement that he "lost nerve, turned bitter and left behind an awesome cynicism. . . ."

For was he not contending in his time ("against the stream" as Karl Barth would say) for a hope that is *not* seen? To call hope a lonely lantern (even the hope of a man *with* faith) can as well mean that hope, just *because* it is hope and not sight, just *because* it cannot be apprehended apart from faith, is for just that reason *not* "dependent upon the challenge and threat of the circumstances of life."

For against the cozy, shallow optimism of his century in a world where evils were thought to be rapidly yielding to reason, education and good will, Melville felt obligated to remind his compatriots of a more serious contention against principalities and powers in high places. You and I will prefer Paul's description of spiritual warfare with unseen antagonists to the novelist's assertion, whatever exactly he means by it, that "the invisible spheres were formed in fright," and it is no surprise that the inspired Apostle speaks more aptly. Our hope, as you

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The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

VOLUME XXXII OCTOBER 1961 No. 10

Modern Art and Modern Preaching

THE other day — purely by accident, I assure you — I visited a modern art exhibit. It was no place for a man who is still in some respects a small town, South Carolina boy, but my being there was, as I say, an accident. The Grant Park underground automobile lot and the Chicago Art Institute are across the street from each other and, not having been to either during my year and a half in the windy city, I made a natural, and I hope pardonable, mistake. I shall know the difference in the future: the Art Institute is the one with the bronze lions.

The exhibit — contemporary Spanish — featured the use of collage, which is the artistic term for an agglomeration of fragments, foundry drippings, rotted scraps of wood, broken glass, mutilated pieces of cloth — all liberally daubed and sprayed in somber colors. This technique is popularly known as "construction of found objects." For example, take strips from a burlap sack (croaker or guano), some charred pieces of weatherboard, coal tar and a scrap of fishing net (you can substitute a torn tennis net or a gouged snood); arrange; spray and label. (Be sure the label has not the remotest connection with the concoction. Such mystery titillates the connoisseurs.) Not everyone can do this — fortunately. The arranging does require artistry; but what a waste of craftsmanship.

I lingered at the exhibit long enough to justify the click of the guard's counter in numbering me among the viewers and left somewhat depressed but greatly enlightened. For one thing I was grateful that the spiritual health of a whole people cannot be measured solely or completely by the esoteric art forms produced or lauded by the cysts of eccentricity which we have with us always. We are not *that* sick. For another, I had a renewed sympathy for the common people who are mystified and repelled by some forms of modern art and a new appreciation of those people who, with no fear of being called cultural pariahs, openly label collage and nonrepresentational paintings as vapid, hollow pretensions. It was, you remember, an unsophisticated, naive child who saw the nudeness of the emperor and who, indifferent to the fawning public, said, "The emperor is naked."

Also — and now to the point — I came away from the Art Institute with a new sympathy for congregations which complain that they do not understand what their ministers are preaching. The analogy is overwhelming and in several respects applicable. For example, where some artists deliberately select collage as a medium, some ministers are reduced by laziness to the use of an agglomeration of fragments in preparing their sermons. I, for one, confess that there were Saturdays when I threw together an accumulation of odds and ends, stuck it on a textual skewer and called it a sermon. Moreover, even as some modern artists contemptuously repudiate any form of expression which has ever been used before, so some ministers in their enslavement to the novel would rather be found dead than to preach a sermon which has an introduction, three points and a conclusion. (I do not, of course, hold that this outline is the divinely ordained homiletical structure, but I see no reason why any form should be rejected simply because it has been used before. The craving for novelty can bcome pathological. Some art critic once said to young artists that they should see how much *like* the masters they could be before unleashing their own artistic idiosyncrasies. This applies to the preacher as well as to the painter.)

Finally, some modern art is deliberately nonrelated, nonrepresentational. The artist insists that he is not "saying" anything, that he has no message and no interest in communication. (One wonders why he avidly accepts invitations to exhibit a work which is so created that it cannot elicit from the viewer any response akin to the experience of the creator. Surely there is some explanation other than the commercial one.) The detachment which some modern artists achieve by design and much labor we ministers sometimes achieve unintentionally and with much less effort. We can cut ourselves off from the understanding ear by pretentious language, by the use of abstruse theological concepts, by attempts to transplant in the parish a seminary or journalistic jargon which may be a fruitful plant in its native setting but is a weed in the pulpit. We can lose touch with our

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Toward an Earthy Church

By Theodore A. Gill

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16.

OUR TEXT you have heard. You have known and loved that text since childhood, and it's a good thing you have, because that text is not just a favorite passage. It is the heart of the whole matter. It is why we are here at all, and not just here in this hall or at home, but why we are anywhere at all. It is why we *are,* at all. It is awesome, isn't it? Here you have your finger on the pulse of the universe. Here you feel the throb of the life that sustains us all. Suddenly the paper of this biblical page becomes the thin wrist skin of the world, where you feel the beat at the heart of everything.

I

Our text is, in fact, the theme song of the Bible. It is what the Christian revelation is all about. From beginning to end the Bible is about the God who made the world, and who preserved the world, even when his rebellious creatures flawed it; about the God who lived in that world and finally died for that world, and for the sake of that world refused to be downed even by death. Yes, from beginning to end this is what the Bible is about. John 3:16 is called "The Little Gospel," but that isn't because it is a small part of one of the gospels. It is "The Little Gospel" because in brief, beautiful phrases it sings the good news of the whole revelation.

Have you ever thought what an enormous, what a sweeping love story the Bible really is? From cover to cover isn't it about God's love affair with the world? The drama and the suspense come of course from the fact that the world turns on its divine Lover over and over again. We break with him. We resist him. We throw him over for some other affection, for some other allegiance, for some other something. But does God ever give up? Just when we think most surely he has forgotten, doesn't he always show up? Not always the way we would expect him to come in, but always showing up. Often disappointed in us of course, and angry, and full of rebuke. He chides. He challenges. He punishes. He lets hard, inscrutable, un-understandable things happen to us and to the world. They happen to him too, finally. But in and around and through and after all of that, he loves, he chooses a people. Remember at the beginning he brings them up out of slavery. He gives them a good land. He selects them kings. He sends them prophets. He rescues them from exile, always coaxing, cajoling, warning, urging, but all of it loving, in all of it loving. There are tragic chapters in the story, of course, but always the next page proves that God was in those chapters too, loving as hard as ever.

This loving God is not an invention of the New Testament then. He doesn't wait until John 3:16 to make his appearance. He is the God of the whole Bible. He is the only God that there is, and the only thing that we know about him for sure is that he loves the world. It is because he so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

No. Nobody had to come here tonight, or tune in tonight, to learn any of that from me. That is what got us going as Christians and what keeps us going as Christians. It is not information we arrive at when we try long enough to be Christians. It is where we start. It is what gets us going and keeps us going as Christians, this certainty of the love of God, the knowledge of the indomitable, indefatigable love of God.

But maybe our time together this evening will have been worth while if we remind ourselves beyond this that it is the *world* that God loves. That we do sometimes overlook, not the fact that he loves, but *what* he loves; yes, this we sometimes miss. We think it is just *us* that he loves: men, spirits, souls, as we say. Well, when we think that way we're wrong. That isn't what he loves. He doesn't love that way. You couldn't be more

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THEODORE A. GILL, *prior to his appointment as president of San Francisco Theological Seminary, San Anselmo, California, was editor of the Pulpit and managing editor of* The Christian Century. *Dr. Gill's sermon, "Toward an Earthy Church," was delivered before the Chicago Sunday Evening Club, Orchestra Hall, Chicago, on April 30, 1961.*

wrong. Before God ever made us he made the world, and when he made us he didn't make spirits or souls. He made flesh and blood worldly, whom he loved, whole men, real live, bony, bloody, glandular, hairy human beings, and he put us in a real live, earthy, rocky, watery, substantial world, and he set us to making real live, structural, institutional, political, economic history, and it is all of that that he loves. All of that is in that word in the New Testament. All of this is the world which he loves. All of that is what he lived in. All of that is what he died for. All of that is what he wants back. All of that is what he expects us to reclaim for him. There is precious little ectoplasm in the Bible. God is the great Materialist. We offer him our souls and he says, "Thanks, but that won't do." He doesn't want souls. He wants whole human beings. Don't try to crawl out on that then by offering him just the airiest, most porous part of you.

II

He doesn't want just whole men and women either. He wants his whole world. He loves his whole world, and he will have his whole world. Oh, not uncritically he doesn't love it. There is plenty in the world that he condemns, that he cracks down on over and over again, but God's disappointment, his displeasure, his discipline, are all part of his fundamental love of the world.

What do you suppose the Almighty can make of all our hemming and hawing and dodging at this point. We seem to act, or we would like to get him to agree that we act most like Christians when we behave most like angels, but we've got to come off that. We have no documentation for any such hopes or claims. God made angels, if he made angels, to be whatever angels are. He made angels to do whatever angels do. And when God made men he made them not to be angels but to be men, alive and human and active in the world that he loves. We've got to get over thinking that being Christian is letting our spirits go all a-glitter and a-twitter in the occasional hush of a Christian church service. Being Christian is not in this kind of occasional agitation. Being Christian is letting our whole historic selves be activated for God in and for his whole beloved creation. We've got to get over thinking that we look best to God when we are looking most meanly, most hatefully, at the world. It is his world. He loves it. Watch out how you talk about it, then! I hope in these programs in years past you and your predecessors — our predecessors here — have not ever sung that terrible old hymn: "Earth is but a desert drear. Heaven is my home." That's not a Christian hymn, however many Christians have sung it. That's blasphemy! You don't tell the Creator of the world earth is but a desert drear! He made it! That's the back of your hand in the teeth of the Almighty! Don't speak that way to the Creator of this earth! We do ourselves no good, we do him no honor when we despise his world, for God so loved the world — that's where we start. We get things exactly inside out and upside down and hindside foremost when we act as if the most Christian thing that we could do, the most saintly pose we can strike, is to condemn this awful, bewitching, wicked world. Careful there, I say! Gently! Gently now! For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the *world* through him might be saved!

III

See what that means for us? We've got to love the world too. Oh, we have to criticize and correct it, and fight it sometimes, and always be on guard against everything that's wrong in it; but we must love it first, last, and always. The character of God's action must be the character of our reaction to his action — and *God so loved the world.*

That means a lot of things. It means, most obviously, a new respect for nature, doesn't it? This is my Father's world, and so I can't do anything that I please with it. I can't rip it up and ravage it, raping it at will for the money that is in it. I can't lacerate the landscape with unreduced strip mines, and poison the streams and pollute the lakes and contaminate the air and powder pastures with fallout. It is not just aesthetics that calls me on this either, or it isn't even just civic virtue, or even concern for life. It's because this is my Father's world that we are molesting, tormenting, that we are tainting, and he so loves it! It is because of the sacredness of stuff that we have to cry out against this. It isn't just for my own skin that I loathe the super-bomb, but for the vulnerable skin of God's beautiful creation and what will happen to it if the monstrous mistake is ever made.

It is God's love for the world and ours that prompts in us too a new concern for what happens in history. He is not satisfied with the stratospheric mingling of small "s" spirit — mine — with capital "S" Spirit — the cosmic. That isn't what he's after. That isn't what he'll settle for. We know we have to be — if we love him and the world he loves — we have to be against war when peace is possible, and against anything and everything that would set us to killing when we could be living, which would keep some men starving when all mouths could be filled, which would mete out injustice where justice is available, and coercion where freedom goes begging, and lies where the truth is at hand. And we know that we have to be against war and poverty and injustice and lies not just because they make trouble for us, but because they distort the world that was beloved by the God we love. "Love me, love my world," says God, and that means hating and resisting everything that

vexes, that torments the world and his people in it.

There were some writers in the New Testament, you know, who were so overwhelmed by all that was disruptive and destructive in the world that they counseled Christians to get out of the world as much as they could, to isolate, to insulate themselves from the world, and the Lord only knows, we can understand those writers' apprehension. We have sickening reason for understanding their nervousness. But we cannot take their counsel because the main weight of the Bible lies elsewhere. God so loved the world that he got right into it to set right what was so radically wrong with it, so it isn't Christian to try to shut out the world or to try to get out of the world. The Incarnation was God getting right into the world, finding it good enough even as it was so that he could be at home in it. Let us be very careful that we not be more royalist than the King at this point. What was good enough for God had better have some good in it for us. God didn't go to the humiliation and the extravagance of incarnating himself just to bid us disincarnate ourselves. God who is Spirit did not clothe himself in flesh to tell us that we should put off flesh to become spirit. God did not enter the world just to tell us to get out of the world. God did not get all tangled up in history to tell us somehow or other to avoid history entanglement. Because God loves the world he got into it, and so must we too. That means participation in culture, in society, in history, in the community. This is where our Christian duty lies, in the world that God loves.

IV

You see what is not being said here now tonight? that the truly, the fundamentally or ultimately Christian life and action lies in the church? I am *not* saying that tonight. Christian life and action *center* in the church, but they *happen,* they *count,* in God's economy, outside the church, in the world. The world is what God cares for and what God worries about. The world is original. The world is ultimate. In the beginning there were the heaven and the earth. At the end we look for a new heaven and a new earth. God made it in the beginning. He reconditions it for the end, and at the end, it is told us in terms of the great vision which winds up the Bible, there was no temple therein, *no temple therein,* for the church is transitional, provisional. It is here to do a job. It's here wherever the job is being done. It's not here when the job is done. And the job is in the world. Not the church for the church. That's sinful. That's as sinful for that institution as it is for any man to curve in on himself. The church is here to do the job, but the job is to be done in the world and for the world. The world, you know, is what the church is for, not the other way around, the way we so often think of it, the church what the world is for. It is because God made the world and loves it even when it goes wrong that Christ died and lived, and the church ensued. The church is for the world. The church is the launching pad, the catapult. There the Christian missile is fueled, is directed, is oriented, but the world is the orbit in which the real work is done, where the results are obtained, where the effect is made.

All of this is obvious enough, but I'm not sure that I myself who speak it have understood it very long. Time was, for instance, when I was somewhat critical of the men's organization in my own denomination, and that wasn't such a long time ago, either. About a year ago at one of their great national meetings I found myself comparing them somewhat unfavorably to the ladies in our denomination. I brooded out loud on our women's long-time industry in the church, and all the things they did to raise money for the church. I wondered out loud about what had become of all the aprons which the women had rickracked over the last umpteen generations, what had happened to all the hot pads that had been tatted, or however you make hot pads, all the meat loaves that had been panned, and all the cabbage that had been grated for bazaars and midweek suppers. It's easy to smile at the ladies homely virtues, of course, but you can't laugh off their achievements. They this way sustained the mission of the church in the far places of the world. By all their industry they were able to send Christian witnesses to distant lands and to support their work there. Laugh if you will at our ladies, but there, on strong piles driven down through heaving seas of cole slaw, stands the foreign mission of the church.

And what, I asked at the time of these men, what have you done? Where is the monument to men's activity in the church? You've handled an awful lot of knives and forks in the last decade, I said, but with precious little stab or slash that I've been able to see. You've hard-haunched your way through dreary season after dreary season of suppers and speeches. You've glaze-eyed your way through tray after tray of colored slides of trips you never wanted to make, shown by acquaintances you wouldn't have wanted to travel with anyway. You've paid something in dues and something more for dinners your wives made you get out to attend, but what single anything stands anywhere in the church today because you've been so dogged in your devotion to the men's organization of the denomination?

Well, as I say, that was the way I talked a year ago, but not this year when I got to speak to the same group again, because now I thought I saw that all that kind of comment had been beside the point. Quite rightly the men have not been concerned to build monuments in the church, though they have loyally pitched in to help out in local situations, but they have — I hope this is the right

interpretation — understood their main job as not consisting of certain assignments within the church but of being a certain kind of person in the world. They do their Christian duty by representing the church in the world. They have seen that that is their mission. And so it is yours. You represent the church in the world. This is where your ministries are, with men and women in the face to face, guards down, relationships of life. It is up to all of you to realize the gospel's realism in your worlds of reality. It is up to you, all of you, to preach in deed the practicality and practicability of the gospel in your very practical world. This is where the Christian witness is necessary now, and you are the men and women to bring it, to live it, to be it, there.

But oh, be careful now, if you should nod your head to all this, be careful when you agree to any such reading of your intent, when you are so released from churchly preoccupations, will you really take up your ministry in and to the world? Are you sure you won't use the release from one responsibility as a crawl-out from the other? Had you reckoned with what is involved in this shift of focus? Do you realize that this means that all of you is involved, all the time — your home life, your work life, your politics, your economic views, your racial attitudes, your international opinions? Everything, anything that affects this world of God's and ours, all of that is now involved. In every decision now, in every attitude, in every idea, you must ask, "Is this good for God's beloved world? Is it as good as I can make it? Is this good enough for the world that God made and loved enough to live in and die for, or is it only good for me? Does this set God's world ahead, or only me? Does this enhance the creation, or only decorate me?" This is the painful bind we're in, if we take seriously God's love for the world and our love for him.

It is no easy charge, then, and yet what else can we do? There is just no escaping it. The world is the arena of our Christian action. The world is what God has always been after, what he is still after, what he is going to get.

We are not being led astray here by overemphasis on one verse. We are echoing and amplifying the whole revelation on which we live. Let it all ring at the end then. Elsewhere in the Gospel of John we hear that Christ is the Savior of the *world,* that he is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the *world,* that he has overcome the *world.* He is the Light of the *world,* and the Bread of God that gives life to the *world.* As Christ was sent into the *world,* so we are sent into the *world.* In other gospels the *world* is the field in which the sower sows the seed. The gospel is to be preached to the whole *world,* as it says. Or again, as Christ is the Light of the *world,* so it is meant that his body shall be the light of the *world.* St. Paul says the same thing: "All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation." At the end of the Bible the letter-writing John reiterates, "He is the expiation for our sins, and not ours only but also for the sins of the whole *world.*" And the John of the magnificent vision insists, "The kingdom of the *world* has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever."

All of which italicizes, but adds nothing to the Little Gospel with which we began: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

To which, Amen and Amen.

Prayers

Prayer for a Preacher

Let thy Holy Spirit touch his lips —
Let his words touch our hearts —
Let our lives touch the world's need —
for Christ's sake. Amen.
— *S. M. Shoemaker, Calvary Episcopal Church, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.*

The Gracious Thing

TEACH us, Lord, to say and do the gracious thing graciously. There is so much in life of bruskness. All of us both want and need the thoughtful word, the kindly understanding. In our turn, may we learn to speak and show appreciation. So, as we hold up one another, we implement the royal law: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. In the name of Thy Son Jesus who saw faith values in an alien woman as well as in a Roman officer, and the likeness of heaven itself in children. Amen. — *Hillyer H. Straton, First Baptist Church, Malden, Mass.*

Counseling College Students

Their Characterization in Recent Fiction

(First of three parts)

By Herbert Stroup

WHAT is the college student of this generation like? What are his problems and aspirations? To what does he look in faith as the substance of his unrealized hopes?

Increasingly ministers are taking interest in the counseling of college youth. One reason is that they have gained such a degree of knowledge and skill in counseling that they are now able to gear their efforts according to age differences, sexes, types of problems, and institutional settings. In addition, many ministers find that college students are looking to them increasingly for help. In some cases this help is unavailable on the campus; in others, the students do not use the college facilities. Some students do not like to discuss their personal problems with college personnel, both because they want an "outsider's" viewpoint and because they don't want to reveal themselves in depth to their colleges. Probably this trend will continue by reason both of the needs of students and the competence of ministers.

The plain fact is that ministers will have to get used to counseling college students and college graduates with greater frequency than ever before. The birth rate and social expectancies have fixed that. The size of the 18-24-year-old age group in the United States will increase about 61 per cent by 1970, while the total population will increase about 20 per cent. Largely because of the accelerated increases in the birth rate since 1940, the annual number of high school graduates is expected to nearly double between now and 1970. College enrollments are expected to increase from the present three million to six million plus by 1970, partly as a result of the higher birth rate but also because of a change in the choice of occupation. Even by 1965 the work force will have changed substantially. Estimates indicate that it will be composed of 37 per cent more professional and technical personnel, 22 per cent more proprietors and managers, 4 per cent fewer unskilled workers, and 15 per cent fewer farmers and farm workers than in 1955.

In the first half of United States history, the expanding western frontier represented the churches' greatest challenge. In the second half the rapidly rising urban centers with their attendant problems and achievements constituted the preoccupation of the churches. The stresses in every aspect of the life of the churches in making the transition from the farm to the city are still evident. But the next era in American history well may be marked by the particular style of life developed through higher education with its accompanying influence upon the nature of the individual personality and the social classes. The churches clearly will need to adjust themselves to the requirements of this new period. Ministers in their counseling functions will be required to understand college youth as never before and to gain the knowledge and skill involved in helping them as students and as graduates to fulfill themselves.

How can the minister understand what the current generation of college students is like?

Commonly the literature of a given period is a perceptive source of insights on persons and groups needing analysis. A large number of the novels of the recent years, however, have employed college settings, it would seem, merely as a convenient means of telling a story which would fit properly into any other social setting. Nathaniel Burt's *Make My Bed*, for example, relates the account of a "triangle" which occurs on a college campus.[1] The narrator is a music teacher in a college near New York City. Nothing in the light novelization throws distinctive light upon the predicament of the college student as such. Again, Carlos Baker's *A Friend in Power* is a civilized and entertaining book about upper-echelon college life.[2] Enfield University is choosing a new president. The choice is not simple since

HERBERT STROUP *is professor of sociology and anthropology, chairman of the department of personnel service and dean of students at Brooklyn College, Brooklyn, New York.*

[1] Boston: Little, Brown, 1957.

[2] New York: Scribner, 1958.

it involves interminable committee meetings, low-grade conniving, parties, and some academic work. Baker's book is a parallel to the rash of novels on big business. It is Cash McCall all over again, but within a university setting. Similarly Eileen Bassing in *Home Before Dark* involves a chief character whose toadying activities are concentrated upon promotion and success in cheap campus politics.[3] Robertson Davies' *Leaven of Malice* recounts the vain and malicious reactions of Professor Walter Vambrace.[4] Although these novels to some extent are entertaining and instructive of human nature and relations, they do not directly reveal the college student, his problems and his aspirations.

Other novels, however, do speak to the situation of the college student. What they say, moreover, does not reflect the generally sentimental notion of youthful, innocent, believing intellects who are seeking the means of serving their fellow man in the spirit of Christian charity. The college student, according to these picturizations, is a sensate, directionless, troubled, yet anxious person who in many instances fails to find in higher education the maturity, stability, and security for which he is seeking. They make an earlier book like C. G. Lumbard's *Senior Spring,* an iconoclastic novel about life at the University of California at Berkeley, read like a Sunday school tract.[5]

Take *Halfway Down the Stairs* by Charles Thompson as an example of the newer literature.[6] It is concerned with a group of college people at Cornell about the time of the Korean War. Dave Pope and Ann Carlin are the principal protagonists. Dave came, he says, from a grubby Massachusetts town, the son of decent but essentially grubby people. He defines grubbiness as something inside him that won't rub out no matter how much culture or money he gets. Says Dave: "That little stigma of grubbiness, that sneaking piece of self-knowledge that says, 'You're *still* a puny jerk from Philip, Mass.,' remains, and is something my parents gave me."

Ann is a girl who has looks, money and breeding. Her insatiable thirst for men, however, causes her unending grief on land and sea. She is tortured by desires over which she does not possess the adequate means of control or even of explanation. Like Albert Camus' chief character in *The Stranger,* she is a stranger to herself, unable to fathom what it is that has placed her in life as she is or how she will make sense out of her experience.[7]

The fact is that both Dave and Ann, like their raucous supporting cast, are unable to cope with anything. Life itself has them in its grip and they cannot break through its strangle hold. They have failed to grow up even after college. They are, in Tillich's terms, estranged from themselves as persons, from society and from life itself.

The current novels' emphasis upon pleasure or sensateness differs markedly from the "flaming youth" of Scott Fitzgerald. His characters possessed a higher degree of personal integration. They broke the social taboos in a more conscious way. They delighted in being different. They lived to shock their elders and to some extent themselves. Social violations were given the function of leading to maturity. Purpose and high aims were involved in living. One only needed to sweep away the supercilious and self-limiting standards of petty men in order to realize the self.

Currently, however, college students are being described as emotionally disturbed persons who are fundamentally unable to act constructively. They are not conscious of purpose and high aims. They live for the moment and without the hope of understanding themselves or of gaining that degree of stability which usually is defined as an attribute of maturity. They are troubled with living in the present moment and the only way they have of asserting their superiority as men over the moment is by killing it or crushing all meaning out of it. They are, in the words of others, lost, beat, and silent.

Robert Gutwillig also has attempted to delineate the current generation of college youth. In his *After Long Silence,* twenty-six-year-old Gutwillig portrays the student as prematurely aged and jaded, somewhat after the manner of the popular Francois Sagan.[8] Tom Freeman, the hero of the story, and his pals run through the complete catalogue of adolescent sins in an ivy leaguish college named Arden. Freeman is as manic in his search for self-identity as a father reaching for the hand of his drowning daughter. The story is essentially plotless, since Gutwillig apparently is saying that individual life knows no development or direction in terms of purpose and morality. Life to Tom Freeman is basically an everlasting merry-go-round which one gets on at any point; it isn't going anyplace; one just enjoys the ride for what it is. The tune that the merry-go-round plays in this novel consists of a ten-day blackjack game, a hundred mile drive in a stolen milk truck, a lascivious "cinnamon caper," and the constant tinkling of cocktail glasses. But the repetitious quest for pleasure does not satiate. Pleasure, like the narrow stems of the cocktail glasses, keeps breaking between the grasping fingers of their efforts to escape boredom. Life is frivolous. Life is insane. Life is grasped-for but never-attained pleasure.

The illustrations of current fiction which have been chosen for presentation here might seem to

[3] New York: Random House, 1957.
[4] New York: Scribner, 1955.
[5] New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954.
[6] New York: Harper, 1957.
[7] New York: Knopf, 1946.
[8] Boston: Little, Brown, 1958.

point to the exceptional and unrepresentative were it not for the fact that the list of novels which maintain a similar point of view is so long. Current efforts to describe the nature of men have shown a lively interest in the college student or graduate. The efforts to characterize this generation's young people also is a regular theme of nonfictional writing.

The names of those contributing to the "new literature" on the current generation are increasing in number: Richard Frede, Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, Howard Nemerov, Clellon Holmes, Colin Wilson, John Osborne, Kingsley Amis, Doris Lessing, John Wain, Bill Hopkins, Stuart Holroyd, Kenneth Tynan, Lindsay Anderson, and so forth. They appear to be united in denying positive meaning to life, in striking back at society for its frustration of the individual's quest for status and security, in exalting pleasure as the golden principle of morality, and in concentrating upon the moment as the final revelation of the true nature of existence.

The characterization of college youth in current fiction appears to be rather uniform. Fiction, of course, very often seizes upon a particular attribute of personality or situation, magnifies it and in so doing tends to distort the most comprehensive version of it. Therefore, the singularly common view of the novelists needs to be corrected by the broadening influence of social scientific accounts. But fiction is able, as social science is unable, to penetrate within the circle of meaningfulness in a personal and intuitive way. It is able to dramatize truths and to communicate them vividly.

The estimates of college students provided in recent novels call upon the minister to understand them and the challenge which they present for the Christian faith both in theoretical and practical ways. It is necessary for the minister to be able to face the bold, chaotic, sensual descriptions of human nature as an expression of the current generation of youth's inability to overcome the varieties of meaninglessness which plague it. These descriptions of human experience point vividly to what sometimes has been termed "original sin." They suggest the unredeemed nature of human nature. They tell their version of the human predicament in language which is understandable to this generation of youth. They know sin, although not by that term; they wallow in it, as has, in fact, every generation. To them, however, the ministrations of the Christian gospel have little if any validity or meaning. Samuel Beckett, the author of *Waiting for Godot,* has put it in these words: "The problem of the 19th century was the death of God; the problem of the 20th century is the death of man."

How it came about that the churches lost their intellectual and persuasive vitality and ability to communicate with the minds of many of today's youth is a problem which bears talented analysis. How the churches will be able to speak convincingly to the mind and emotions of this generation of nonbelievers is of critical importance.

Hospital 1961

How black your hands are, Christ!
Rough, and very unmanicured,
Mighty steady, though, easing a helpless body
from bed to stretcher.
They're brown now — slim — gentle —
More intimate than my own —
Sure, reserved, and understanding.
My! Your hands are swift!
Cutting, tying —
I never knew you wore rubber gloves.
White hands again.
Poking needles, but in just the right places.
Black hands — yellow hands —
Christ, how unpredictable you are!

Flat-heeled white oxfords
And such filmy white stockings.
I never expected to see you wear those. Never.
Your feet are so poorly pictured wearing sandals.
Sandals just wouldn't be practical in a hospital
ward.
I didn't know that you had corns and bunions but
now I do.
Those cut-out canal-boats you manage show your
black and swollen toes.
They hurt, too!
Yet you guide the wheel chair, pace the halls
smoothly.
You? Really? — In spike heels tripping in to visit
and cheer —
Christ, you amaze me!

Your head — pictured in books.
By old masters or new.
It doesn't fit
These hands. These feet. They change
Swifter than gloves or shoes slip on or off.
But the light — the love — the blazing wonder
Of your countenance.
These fit. These match. They belong
And you are real. You are whole.
Christ, YOU are here!

DOROTHY V. BENNIT

The Test in Protestantism

By Orva Lee Ice

AFTER Martin Luther had nailed his ninety-five theses to the door in Wittenberg he wrote, "Had I known all in advance, God would have been put to great trouble to bring me to it. I don't know whether now I could be so daring." Today this protest has become conventional. Perhaps there is now need for someone to protest against Protestantism. Today we are many, but not much. And there are good reasons.

First, Protestantism is not one thing. To define it would be almost as difficult as to define the word "Christian." It is handicapped by meaningless names that do not define the character or purpose of Christianity. Its names are anachronistic and perpetuate issues long forgotten. What of Christianity does the word "Presbyterian" signify? What of Christianity does the name "Quaker" define? And other such names as "Mormon," "Methodist," "Campbellite," "Congregationalist" and the like? "Christian" may be a happy name, but the denomination's emphasis is too trivial to base a world movement upon. The thing they insist upon is insignificant compared with promoting the kingdom of God. These denominational signs are like tags on museum pieces. The true mission of the church is lost in the endeavors to promote the unimportant. Truth is obfuscated by traditional apologetics. There is a need to take the message of Christ out of theological mothballs. What Presbyterian knows or cares any more about "predestination?" What Baptist could explain the meaning or importance of "once in grace always in grace?" What does "consubstantiation" mean to the average Lutheran?

The Protestant denominations think in terms too parochial. Their gospels are piecemeal. They betray the richness of the Christian faith. The church means little to them compared with their churches. Their basic fallacy lies in that they seem to hold that the church, in order to be the church, must be made up of people who agree about doctrine. Sectarian pride is promoted; they work for the good of their particular institution.

If the argument is advanced by them that other churches are just as Christian, they beg the question; for what good reason then can any denomination give for being separate, if all are the church of Christ? It must be recognized that Christ is greater than any sectarian definition of him.

One wonders what glories the church of Christ could reveal if Protestants strove as ardently for Christianity as they do for denominationalism. The African at the recent United Nations meeting said, "You fly through the air like birds, you swim in the sea like fish, but how to walk the earth like brothers you do not know."

Note the fissiparous tendency in Protestantism, even within any given denomination. The Baptist Church splits and the new unit is called the "True Baptist Church"; the "True Baptist Church" has a schism and the new organization is named the "Only True Baptist Church"; the "Only True Baptist Church" divides and the reformers take the name of "The Only True Bible Baptist Church"; each unit becoming more loyal to its peculiar tenet than to Christ.

Competition may be the life of trade but it is the death of the Christian effort. It makes for a "seller's market" and cheapens religion. Base methods of recruitment are followed. Trading stamps are used to lure attendance. Unbecoming attractions are advertised. The winsomeness of Christ is forgotten and the mission of the church is prostituted. The gospel is put to shame.

It is like the pearl merchant who retired and left his thriving business — the selling of pearls of great price — to his son. Later he returns to find his son selling oyster shells and fertilizer.

The church will be divided until it returns to the central fact of exalting Christ. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

Let us interpolate that the unifying factor cannot be the Bible. Unfortunately, we place the

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ORVA LEE ICE *became minister of Temple Terrace Community Church, Tampa, Florida in October, 1959. He previously served fourteen-year pastorates at Wilkinsburg Baptist Church, Pittsburgh and Calvary Baptist Church, Minneapolis. Dr. Ice is the author of* A Candle for the Dark *and* Tomorrow Is Yours, *both published by Abingdon.*

Bible in an unbiblical position; a place it does not claim for itself. Most all divisive factions claim biblical authority; their doctrines are fearfully and wonderfully devised. Most often the sect finds itself maintaining loyalty to a verse of Scripture at the expense of the Christian spirit.

Keep in mind that Christianity did not come out of the Bible. The church lived a hundred years before the scattered writings of the New Testament were completed. It existed three hundred years before the writings of the Bible were canonized. First we had Christ and his tuitions; then men wrote about Christ and the things he taught. The Bible came out of the church; not the church out of the Bible.

In 1535 Luther wrote, "When our opponents urge the Scripture against Christ, we urge Christ against the Scripture. The Scripture must not be understood as against Christ but for him. Therefore the Scripture must be referred to Christ for his approval or one cannot claim it as true Scripture."

No apostle, no writer of the New Testament claimed to be an authority in the place of Christ. They thought of themselves as "witnesses." Any attempt to unite Protestantism on biblical authority is hopeless. Christ is the focal unit.

Paul emphasized this: "You say I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? I beseech you, brethren, by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you." That which looks to the letter as the Word of God will form only another denomination; that which looks to Jesus Christ as the Word of God builds the true Kingdom. Any use of the Bible that divides Christ must, *ipso facto,* be false to him. It is the misuse of the Scripture that divides and betrays Christ.

The very etymology of the word "Protestantism" brings the meaning of witnessing for, not against. Christ is to be the object of our witness. One could hail the day that never sees another "Baptist," "Methodist" or "Presbyterian" made; but Christian people.

We can no longer offer a divided Christ to a divided world. Shall we let his spirit live or crucify him in order to keep our ritual?

Some high school girls paraded to the rostrum with a banner at a football rally. Their banner provoked laughter and the girls were puzzled. Then they discovered that the sign was wrong side out; so they changed it over. Again there was laughter. They had the device wrong side to. Then they turned themselves around and the legend was legible.

There needs to be an about-face in Protestantism. The test of Protestantism is whether or not we show Christ properly to the world so all may read.

Parable of the Missing Who Weren't Missed

MAN-OF-THE-CHURCH: A strange thing happened in church Sunday: our pastor fell asleep while preaching.

MAN-OF-THE-WORLD: That is strange!

MAN-OF-THE-CHURCH: No, that's not strange, but he fell asleep in the pulpit and no one in the congregation noticed it.

MAN-OF-THE-WORLD: That certainly is strange!

MAN-OF-THE-CHURCH: No, that's not strange either. What's strange is that we didn't realize what had happened and continued the service until Wednesday, but when we got home we found that no one in town had even missed us!

MAN-OF-THE-WORLD: That's not strange at all.

— *C. W. Edwards, Garrett Biblical Institute, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.*

Thoughts on Preaching

✚ GRATIANO speaks an infinite deal of nothing. . . . His reasons are as two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff. — *Shakespeare*

✚ ONE MAY as well expect to make a great patriot out of a fencing-master, as to make a great orator out of a mere rhetorician. — *Blackie*

✚ THE PREACHER needs doctrine, to prevent his being a mere barrel-organ, playing over and over the same tunes. — *Strong*

✚ LET THE PULPIT decay, and the cause of Christ is lost. Nothing can take the place of preaching. — *Charles E. Jefferson*

✚ THE BEST rules of rhetoric are, to speak intelligently; speak from the heart; have something to say; say it; and stop when you've done. — *Tyron Edwards*

✚ HE IS the eloquent man who can treat subjects on an humble nature with delicacy, lofty things impressively, and moderate things temperately. — *Cicero*

✚ SOME PLAGUE the people with too long sermons; for the faculty of listening is a tender thing and soon becomes weary and satiated. — *Luther*

Self-Righteousness

By Benjamin E. Shove

FOR what might be called my text I have chosen a quotation from *Christianity, Diplomacy and War,* by Professor Herbert Butterfield:

> "The greatest menace to our civilization is the conflict between giant organized systems of self-righteousness. . . . Each system [is] only too delighted to find that the other is wicked, each only too glad that the other's sins give it the pretext for still deeper hatred and animosity."[1]

Jesus, I believe, denounced no sin in severer words than that of the self-righteousness of the leaders of the organized church. It will not do much good just to say that this country and its western allies must rid themselves of self-righteousness, of the holier-than-thou attitude. I propose, therefore, to consider briefly some of the areas wherein we are, in my opinion, guilty of this grievous sin, in the hope that by looking at it straight in the face we may change our thinking.

First, we of what Toynbee calls the nations of western Christian civilization say that we believe in and are concerned for the uniqueness and ultimate worth of each individual human being and that international communism, which has adopted the Marxist philosophy, has deified the state and regards the individual as a plodding animal that must do the bidding of the state or else.

When Karl Marx wrote the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848, England, France and Germany were in the midst of an industrial revolution. The long hours and the horrible working conditions of the men, women and children in the factories of Marx's day are utterly incredible to us today. The first English Factory Act passed in 1819 was to protect children of nine from work in factories by limiting their working day to twelve hours. The Mines Act of 1842 prohibited underground labor of women of all ages and of boys under ten. In 1847 it was necessary for parliament to pass a law prohibiting factory labor for women and for boys under eighteen for more than ten hours a day. It was against this background that Marx wrote. He was intensely and passionately concerned for the welfare of each man, woman and child. True, I think he was wrong in the method he proposed to better their conditions because he left God and Christ out of his plans. But one can hardly blame him. The organized church of Marx's day did not condemn these practices. It was some forty or fifty years after Marx wrote his *Communist Manifesto* that the church of Christ began preaching the social gospel and denouncing the use of man as a mere cog in the economic machinery. And when the church began to speak, the legislatures began to pass laws banning intolerable working conditions, and the courts began holding these statutes constitutional.

Next, let us consider the charge that the Communist nations are the great aggressor nations. As Toynbee points out in his book, *The World and the West,* Russia has been invaded five times by western armies. It is not surprising, therefore, that Russia, after World War II, thinking of its past experiences, threw up a cordon of satellites around her western borders. As for Asia and Africa, look at any atlas of ten years ago: all of Africa bore European titles — English, French, Dutch, Belgian, Portuguese, German. Indonesia was Dutch; Indo-China, French. If we cease to be self-righteous and truthfully record history, we will have to report that for a period of four and one-half centuries up to 1945, it was the West that was the aggressor.

We have repeatedly charged Red China with being an aggressor nation because, among other things, of what happened in French Indo-China and the division of Vietnam into North and South Vietnam. In this connection I would like to read from a handbook issued in 1942 by the Commission on a Just and Durable Peace of the Federal Council

[1] From *Christianity, Diplomacy and War* by Herbert Butterfield. London: The Epworth Press. Nashville: Abingdon Press. Used by permission.

BENJAMIN E. SHOVE *received his A.B. degree from Yale College in 1914 and his LL.B. degree from Columbia Law School in 1917. A senior partner in the firm of Hancock, Dorr, Ryan & Shove, he has practiced law in Syracuse, New York continuously since 1919. This sermon was delivered by Mr. Shove at the Laymen's Sunday Service of the Camillus Baptist Church, Camillus, New York on October 30, 1960.*

of the Churches of Christ in America. John Foster Dulles was chairman of this commission. In this handbook appears the following with respect to the Japanese claim that its armies were liberating the peoples of color from white domination:

> The white communities which ruled Shanghai, Hongkong, Manila and Singapore were racially snobbish to an extreme degree. Resentment against indignities remembered over a long time provide the driving force for armies who exact a revenge multiplied many times.
>
> The Japanese delegation to the Paris Peace Conference [after World War I] was instructed by its government to have written into the covenant of the League of Nations a declaration of racial equality. They failed, due principally to objections by representatives of England and the United States. Because so many Americans have forgotten all about this incident, which has had effects which persist to this day, it should be of interest to recall the exact language of the declaration which the Japanese vainly tried to get into the covenant of the League: "The equality of nations being a basic principle of the League of Nations, the high contracting parties agree to accord, as soon as possible, to all alien nations of states members of the league, equal and just treatment in every respect, making no distinction, either in law or fact, on account of their race or nationality."
>
> The Delaware conference was poignantly aware of the importance of the race factor in any possible peace. It said: "Among the primary factors in the maintenance of a just and durable peace will be equitable treatment of all racial groups that make up the world's population. Therefore, the securing of justice now for racial groups is essential if America is to make its full contribution in securing a just and durable peace. We acknowledge with profound contrition the sin of racial discrimination in American life and our own share, though we are Christians, in the common guilt. So long as our attitudes and policies deny peoples of other races in our own or other lands the essential position of brothers in the common family of mankind we cannot safely be trusted with the making of a just and durable peace."

So far as I recall, this was never referred to when France was finally expelled from Indo-China. I think it fair to ask what was Red China actually and in truth doing in the Indo-China liberation? Was it a big aggressor gobbling a small defenseless nation? Or was it a large nation helping an oppressed, underdeveloped people throw off the last colonial shackles of the French Empire?

It was not until 1946 that the Federal Council of Churches renounced the pattern of segregation in race relations as unnecessary and undesirable and a violation of the gospel of love and human brotherhood. In 1954 the Supreme Court handed down its decision declaring unconstitutional racial segregation in schools. It is interesting to note how the court here, as in the field of social justice, followed the pronouncements of the Church of Christ.

I come now to the issue of disarmament. I think that all Christian theologians admit that disarmament is in accord with the teachings of Christ, but many, if not the great majority, of them claim that unilateral disarmament is a council of perfection and is not realistic or relevant. By relevant or realistic they mean, as I read them, that unilateral disarmament will not achieve the objective which everyone devoutly desires — peace.

First, let us consider whether armament has ever achieved peace. Is it realistic or relevant?

A year ago, my wife and I were in the Tower of London. In several rooms there were displays of armor and weapons. There was the simple English long bow with which the English yeomen completely destroyed the French nobility in the battles of the Hundred Years' War. Then came the first guns and bombards using gunpowder, simple and crude, but vastly superior to the long bow. As I walked through those rooms I remembered England's famous navies with their great battleships. I also recalled Kipling's words in his *Recessional:*

> Far-called, our navies melt away;
> On dune and headland sinks the fire:
> Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
> Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!

How true was Kipling's prophecy, made in 1897. You will recall the lines in the same poem:

> Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
> An humble and a contrite heart.
> Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
> Lest we forget — lest we forget![2]

But has any nation ever had a humble and a contrite heart?

In World War I, in a small way, we had the airplane. In World War II we had the giant bombers and obliteration bombing and a few missiles. Then, suddenly, on August 6, 1945, the world learned that man in his devotion to developing weapons of destruction had reached a new dimension — a single atom bomb, without any warning whatsoever, had been dropped by the United States of America on Hiroshima, killing one hundred thousand people and almost completely leveling the entire city. Three days later another bomb was dropped on Nagasaki.

That started a most frightful race. Russia was not to be outdone. It perfected its own atom bomb in far less time than American experts thought possible. England now has its atom bomb. So, too, has France. The hydrogen bomb which is now being made so far surpasses the bomb dropped on Hiroshima in destructive power as to make the latter insignificant.

Not long ago Russia sent the first cosmonaut into orbit. And we, not to be outdone, joined in the new race to see which would be the first to shoot a man to the moon. And why? So as to maintain our prestige. So far as I am concerned, I want no part of that race. Billions of dollars are being spent on rockets, missiles, space ships and antimissile missiles. And millions — yes, hundreds of millions — of people are living at a starvation level.

If I said that we were in a hell of a state, that would not be proper from a pulpit. If I said that

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[2] Rudyard Kipling, "Recessional." Reprinted by permission of Doubleday and Company, Inc.

the world is in a state of hell, that would be both proper and accurate.

Did we achieve our objectives of World War I and World War II? World War I was to make the world safe for democracy. Surely that has not been done. World War II was to rid the world of German and Japanese militarism. Well, that was done for a while. But now we are urging both Japan and West Germany to rearm. Russia was our ally in World War II and now is our enemy in the cold war. We fought Japan to free China from the Japanese armies. And now mainland China is so wicked that we will not admit it to the United Nations.

I can see no essential difference between the position of Russia and that of the United States and many of its leading clergy with respect to remaining armed with nuclear weapons. Russia says it must remain armed for fear of the United States and as a deterrent to its aggressive action. We use exactly the same argument for our ever-increasing military budget. If we were not self-righteous but were truly objective would we not say that Russia has more grounds to be apprehensive of our intentions than we of theirs? After all, this country is the only one that has ever used the atom bomb.

All history proves that once a nation starts an armament race its people come to believe that the one and only way to peace and safety is to spend more and more on weapons of destruction. And always there is a concomitant build-up of fear and distrust and suspicion of one group of nations towards another group. Therefore, I say keeping armed is utterly irrelevant and unrealistic. It never has achieved peace. It never will.

Did Christ have anything to say to us for such a situation? I believe that what he actually did speaks much more eloquently and forcibly than any words he used.

There came a time in Jesus' life when he knew that the leaders of the Jewish church and nation, backed up by the Roman government and soldiers, would seek to kill him. What should he do? Flee or lead an armed revolt? Jesus could not flee. His mission had not yet been accomplished. He who had preached "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" meant exactly what he said. He could not use violence to overcome violence. The only way he could meet and overcome violence and evil was by nonviolence and love. And so he was crucified. One of the very great lessons to be found in the crucifixion of Jesus is this historical example he set as to how to meet violence and overcome evil. Was his example relevant and realistic? Did it serve to win the hearts and minds and souls of people?

I am convinced that disarmament is not only Christlike but also relevant and realistic for our times. Why should we believe otherwise? Do we believe that Christ's gospel and example have no relevance in the affairs of a nation? Are we to reject as meaningless his prayer that his kingdom come here on earth, his kingdom of love and peace on earth and good will among men?

In the spirit of this gospel we must stop calling Russia and China bad names. We must cease shrugging off as just another bit of propaganda every plan for disarmament advanced by Russia. I believe that the Russian people want disarmament. They would like to have more of their gross national product devoted to the production of consumer goods.

I would channel our economic and technical aid through the United Nations and its permanent committees such as the World Health Organization. We must remember that because of the past history of the West we are suspect when we come offering gifts. We must work through the United Nations and build up confidence in it.

We should cease giving foreign aid simply to stop communism. We should give this aid simply because people are in need. They are hungry. They are naked. They are sick. We have so much and there are so many, many people in the world who have so little.

Disarmament can happen. World peace can be achieved. The start must be right here with you and me — lay people. No government official can take the first step. Social justice and racial integration commenced with small groups here and there of dedicated Christians. The same can be done in the field of disarmament.

The times are desperately dangerous. The remedy must be radical and revolutionary. Of the early Christians, it was said "Here come those that have turned the world upside down." Let us who profess to be followers of Christ again turn the world upside down.

Modern Art and Preaching

(Continued from page 3)

people on Sunday because we have not kept in touch with them through the week. Austin Phelps once said, "Nothing is a sermon which is out of the range of the religious necessities of the people." A theologian can know the religious necessities of man but it takes a pastor to know the current religious necessities of men. Let the modern artist think and do as he wills. We do have a message and it is our duty to communicate that message. We are not bound by classical or traditional definitions of communication. We have instruments and techniques of which our predecessors did not dream. But we are bound, as they were, to bear witness to the truth as we know it in Jesus Christ. — KYLE HASELDEN

The Priesthood of All Believers

By James Wm. Morgan

ON OCTOBER 31, 1517 Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to the church door at Wittenberg, symbolizing a revolt that has affected the course of history, giving rise to a movement we now know as the Reformation. Luther was not the first, nor the only one, connected with this great movement, but his dramatic leadership will always connect him with this event. It is natural that Protestants have celebrated this event as their birthday anniversary.

Too often, Protestants have encouraged the belief that they are just a protesting group. The very name has a negative sound. I once heard a definition of a Protestant as a person who believes that he doesn't have to go to church. Actually, the word has a significant root. It comes from the Latin, *protestare,* which means to speak *for* something, rather than *against.* Because of the Reformation a whole cluster of great and significant beliefs was permitted free expression again. It would be hard to make a list of these great beliefs. A group of beliefs comes out of this great conviction of the "justification by faith," the recognition that man cannot earn his salvation, that it is a gift. There was a new understanding of Christian freedom and responsibility, permitting the individual to be recognized as a responsible person. A new understanding of the Bible as the ground of our faith was freed from the control of the church. There was a whole new concept of vocation for all Christians that had well-nigh been destroyed by concepts that divided life into the sacred and the secular. This and other beliefs have often been expressed by one phrase which will be our main consideration this morning — "the priesthood of all believers."

I fear, however, that Protestants have too often taken the day to be an occasion for taking a swat at their fellow Christians, the Roman Catholics. We have our differences with the Roman Catholics. They are big differences and nothing is gained by ignoring them or making light of them. Wherever Roman Catholic majorities attempt to impose their will upon minorities we must stand for our rights in unequivocal fashion, even as we must fight for the Roman Catholic's right to his own beliefs so long as they are not imposed upon others. There has been a petty and oftentimes tragic bigotry that has dogged our Protestant history for which we must, again and again, beg God's forgiveness. We must remember that, in this country at least, there has never been a sin of Roman Catholicism that quite matches the shame of the Ku Klux Klan. When we declare that we believe in the holy catholic church, we are expressing our essential oneness with all who claim Christ as Lord and Savior. We deny our own faith when we act as though the spirit of Christ cannot enter and work through the Roman Catholic Church. We must draw the circle that takes them in, even though they may draw the circle that shuts us out.

I

What does it mean when we declare that we believe in the "priesthood of all believers"? I'm not the least interested in rattling old bones this morning. I'm concerned only that each person in my hearing shall find in this great belief a meaning that can be expressed in his or her life. Can this help you clarify your relation to God? Can it help you see your relation to your fellow man? Can it help you understand your church?

To do this, we must first clear away some misunderstandings. The corruption of this idea has meant for so many: "Every man is his own priest" or "We don't need priests." If this is your understanding, let me say to you that you have totally and completely misunderstood this great doctrine for which so many have suffered and died. Never did Luther say anything that could be so interpreted. This means only *that every man is a priest to his neighbor.* It is not the means of doing away with priests, but a recognition that God has called everyone whom he has called to Christ to

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JAMES WM. MORGAN, *minister of University Methodist Church, Austin, Texas, is a graduate of Southern Methodist University and its School of Theology (now Perkins). Mr. Morgan served churches in Corpus Christi, Seguin, Georgetown and San Antonio, Texas before coming to his present charge in June, 1959.*

be a priest to the man standing next to him. Why, this is just as revolutionary now as it was 444 years ago!

I grant you it is easy to misread history at this point. Luther was indeed denying the very foundations of the church's priesthood as a class when he denied that ordination granted powers not available to laymen. But it was not so much for the purpose of getting rid of the priestly class as it was a matter of forcing laymen to recognize their responsibility to God and to their fellow men as priests.

II

There are other phrases out of Luther's writings that spell this out even more significantly. Luther loved the word "neighbor," undoubtedly remembering Christ's definition in the story of the Good Samaritan that a neighbor is one who needs your help. Luther declared that the neighbor is God's representative in this evil world. He was saying that man's sacrifices of love and service are not needed by God but that man's neighbor is appointed by God to receive these gifts which man must make if he is to live and express his gratitude to God. A Christian is therefore a channel which opens upward to God by faith and outward to his neighbor by love. All that the Christian possesses he has received from God that he may in turn pass it on to his neighbor. Thus Luther actually uses some strong words that give us pause. He says, "I am to give myself as a Christ to the man that is next to me." That's stating it about as strongly as possible. Every Christian is as a Christ to the other man.

Can you see what a far cry this is from the idea that we just don't need priests? Luther used two other phrases that express this idea. He frequently spoke of "the mutual ministry of all believers" and again of "the priesthood of mutual help." There, indeed, is the heart of the teaching.

Now, what does this say to you as an individual about your relation to God? Well, for one thing, it rather clearly places the burden of Christ upon every soul that would name himself after Christ by calling himself a Christian. God has called each and every one of us to be priests to all others. If we stand responsible before God, we must accept this responsibility for our priesthood. It shows most clearly that we cannot hire this done by employing professional preachers and other professional workers in the church.

Take an example. The confessional of the Roman Catholic Church is basically sound. The only real fault we Protestants find with it is that the Roman Catholic declares confession possible only through the priest. We must confess to one another even as we confess directly to God. One of the gravest problems of marriage is the inability of husband and wife to confess to one another. I know of only one failure that is more serious: the inability of the Protestant minister to confess his sins, because of his pride.

This priesthood of all believers places the burden upon the shoulders of every individual. Every man is a priest to his neighbor, his family, his fellow student, his roommate, and being a priest is an obligation to fulfill the task of love. When you start talking to students about the obligation to love they'll misunderstand you every time, so perhaps I had better explain. The love Christ was talking about was the kind of love God gives us, not because we are lovable and he cannot help loving us but because we cannot live without his love and his acceptance. Thus we are called upon to give this same love to our neighbor and even our enemy, surely not because such are lovable or we cannot help loving them but because they are God's creations and cannot live without our love, even as we cannot live without their love. This love is a will to benefit, an acceptance of these persons for themselves alone as they are, and an unflagging good will toward them.

I am not unmindful of our problems of time and means and ability to fulfill all the burden this places upon us. I'm surely not advising that we are all religious counselors, doctors or financiers to our neighbors. Even the good Samaritan used others in his ministry. But I am trying to hit at this compartmentalization of life that enables so many of us to shield ourselves from our essential priesthood. That's the preacher's business, we say, or the doctor's, or the teacher's, or the United Fund's, or whatever, until we cease utterly to be priests to one another. I fully recognize that I am leaving you in the air in spelling this out in detail and, in a sense, this is my intention: to lay upon your conscience that which God has already laid upon you, the mutual ministry of all believers.

Let me now apply this for a moment in another area of life. We have in our society what Luther found in his society. We have divided life into the sacred realm and the secular realm. We go to divine worship on Sunday and then enter the secular world on Monday. According to this view, God calls his ministers to their tasks but others are free to choose what appeals to them. But when we take seriously the meaning of the priesthood of all believers, this divided world must go. All life is God's and therefore sacred! All are called to be ministers. I've often looked with interest at how the Jehovah's Witnesses have been so correct in this. They are scripturally and theologically right in saying that there are no laymen and ministers. When you unite yourself to Christ, you are his minister. I confess it became somewhat ridiculous during the war when all their members began claiming a professional minister's stand, but this does not disavow their basic truth. Canon Raven was correct also when he said that "the great days

of the church were the days of the monks, the missionaries and the Methodists," for these were all lay-movements.

III

What vistas this raises? Certainly it raises the question as to your vocation. Luther was responsible for this word "vocation" coming alive in our language. It means "calling." It is the belief that God calls every man and woman to his or her task in life. Now, you accept this for a minister and demand that your minister not come to this post for any motive other than the conviction that he is called by God to serve. But where did you get the idea that all others are free to choose whatever task they desire for whatever motives they may have?

You see, all tasks that serve the common good are sacred tasks. Some may indeed be more significant than others, but none is more sacred than others. Is the farmer who feeds the world doing a less sacred task than the professional minister of the church who is feeding the word? Luther is an exciting writer. In a choice passage he once poked a bit of fun at the traditional concept as it applied to the shepherds in the Christmas story. "And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them." "This is wrong," says Luther, with tongue in cheek. "We should correct this passage to read, 'They went and shaved their heads, fasted, told their rosaries and put on cowls.' Instead, we read, 'The shepherds returned.' Where to? To their sheep. Oh, that can't be right!" He continues his spoof, "Did they not leave everything and follow Christ? Must not one forsake father and mother, wife and child, to be saved? But the Scripture plainly says that they returned and did exactly the same work as before. They did not despise their service, but took it up again where they left off, with all fidelity, and I tell you that no bishop on earth ever had so fine a crook as those shepherds."

If we are to stay alive to the living God, we must constantly respond to his call. This is not something once delivered but a continuous calling at every stage of life. For many students here this morning this must surely mean that your full time Christian vocation is study, preparation. For the mother rearing children this is surely the fullest, full time Christian calling there can be. We speak of the problem of modern woman. Is it not the problem of the woman who can no longer find any "cosmic significance" to her life in those years of middle age and beyond? This, I believe, is the greatest source of Christian power dormant in our society today.

But I must finally ask what this means when we look at the church? Well, it ought to mean that you are now able to say in a far more profound way, "I am the church; we are the church." You are not just a congregation of members who do the preacher's bidding. Preachers, pastors, ministers of education are merely a part of your congregation whom you have set aside for specific tasks and leadership. The burden and privilege of Christ's holy church is upon us all.

We do not come together on the Sabbath to fulfill some imaginary religious obligations or to sit and listen to a preacher or teacher tell us how to live. We come together because all of us perform our priesthood so poorly that we must submit ourselves, souls and bodies, to the ministry of the Holy Spirit. We come on Sunday to confess our failures and our sins to one another and to God. We come to hold one another before God for the grace without which we cannot live and serve. We come because in this loving worship we can find God's Holy Spirit most alive in our midst. We come because we cannot live in this difficult world without hearing again and again this great and wonderful good news which is finally the only thing the church has to offer. This is the good news that we are accepted, that God in Christ has spoken to us, that he loves us and accepts us every one, even while we are failures and sinners. And this is the thing that stands us back on our feet and sends us out again to fulfill our ministry in the world as priests in all the walks of life we take.

A certain church in Texas had a minister who faced a series of extremely severe personal crises which caused him to fall into habits that the self-righteousness of the average congregation will not tolerate. And the congregation was quite embarrassed on more than one occasion by their minister. The powers that be recommended that the minister be moved, but the pastoral relations committee of the church did a surprising thing. They said something like this: "We have been blessed through the years by many capable ministers. They have ministered well unto us. Now it is time for us to minister unto our minister. If he is moved to another congregation, they will not understand. Let us try to be his minister."

The priesthood of all believers! In the light of our thinking hear these words from the first Epistle of Peter: "Come to him, to that living stone, rejected by men but in God's sight chosen and precious; and like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were no people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy" (1 Peter 2: 4, 5, 9, 10).

Dearly beloved, you are on the front lines of the Kingdom of God! May God bless you in your ministry.

Antidote to Nothingness

By Kendig Brubaker Cully

ACROSS the years some philosophers have spun theories concerning the ultimate meaninglessness of life. Truth and morality, they have said, are nowhere grounded in objective reality. Taking their cue from such philosophers, social revolutionaries in some cases decided that the state of affairs was so bad that only destruction of the whole system was left as a tenable ideal — hence the Nihilists, devotees of a radical nothingness. For them authority lay nowhere — neither in State nor science, certainly not in religion.

Although nothingness is seldom seen in history to have been a conscious altar for large numbers of people, strands of this view have appeared and reappeared in many generations. In a sense we can even say that some measure of utter cynicism is a normal ingredient of life-interpretation in every age. It does not get organized into a system, usually; for, if it did, that would be in itself a negation of nothingness. Few disciples of nothingness would argue that "nothing" should be codified and systematized until they came out with "something."

In our time the so-called "beatniks" represent in a sense the addiction of some to a life-view emphasizing nothingness. Yet these beatnik tendencies have appeared even in rather more conventional periods. R. L. Duffus, reminiscing about his boyhood and youth in Vermont shortly after the turn of the century, makes the astute comment: "My generation was lost and beat, as a matter of course; the difference was, we forgot to mention it."[1]

Lest those of us who profess ourselves to be religious should too readily dismiss the mood of nihilism as being evidence of a life devoid of purpose, and proceed merely to denounce it as representing a depraved and lesser kind of existence, we ought to look carefully into the matter. It is one thing to write off the cynic as one whom those of Christian principle must condemn. It is quite another thing to do so without realizing that when we judge him we might be writing a judgment against ourselves as well. For the fact is that nothingness has its uses. It even has its *religious* uses. It may even be an essential part of that abyss of being in which we all live and move until we become, through God's grace, what we are meant to be.

In any event, we have the Scriptures to support a more charitable willingness to look nothingness in the face. Psalm 22 is a case in point. The writer affirms, "I am a worm, and no man." Like many devotees of nothingness, he was aware of being adrift in a confused and troubled situation.

> "Many bulls encompass me,
> strong bulls of Bashan surround me;
> they open wide their mouths at me,
> like a ravening and roaring lion."

Long years afterwards Another was to experience this selfsame torment of aloneness:

> "Yea, dogs are round about me;
> a company of evildoers encircle me;
> they have pierced my hands and feet. . . .
> they divide my garments among them,
> and for my raiment they cast lots."

In that complete humanness which they shared, the Psalmist and the Christ knew the utter desolation of at least a temporary nothingness. It was over against this, however, that faith persisted. Though the cry arose, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" it was to that very God that they turned for the only meaning in an otherwise completely meaningless vacuum. The Psalmist could cry *because* of his encounter with nothingness: "For dominion belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations." And Christ on the cross could surrender his soul to his heavenly Father, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit."

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[1] R. L. Duffus, *The Waterbury Record* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1959).

KENDIG BRUBAKER CULLY *is professor of religious education and registrar at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary (Protestant Episcopal), Evanston, Illinois. Dr. Cully served in the Congregational ministry in Massachusetts for 14 years and later, for three years, as minister of education at First Methodist Church, Evanston. He joined the faculty of Seabury Western in January, 1955 and was ordained into the Episcopal ministry that year.*

This delicate tension is woven through all of human life: meaninglessness can be the prelude to meaning. To use a now popular theological way of stating it, the threat of nonbeing is the ground out of which arises, through faith, the courage to be.

This is dramatically highlighted in the postexilic passage in Isaiah 24. The very judgment day of the Lord is portrayed as a time when man is completely cast down into the pit of destruction. The imagery is terrifyingly potent. Complete desolation is associated with that day. No one is exempt: "And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the slave, so with his master. . . . The earth shall be utterly laid waste and utterly despoiled." All the little pleasantries with which man has had joy will turn to bitterness. "The wine mourns, the vine languishes, all the merry-hearted sigh." The unnamed "city of chaos" is broken down. "Every house is shut up so that none can enter. . . . Desolation is left in the city, the gates are battered into ruins."

Those are symbols of "the wasteland" of which a modern poet also can write. That is the state of man and society separated from their only Source of meaning. The biblical dimension seems always to take account of the possibility of meaninglessness in human existence. Whether it be King Saul's seeking in desperation for a word from the Witch of Endor, or Judas' trying to flee from his own self in his final anguish, or St. Paul, who, though delighting in the law of God, saw in his members "another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin," and lamented, "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" The Apostle was able to cry, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" for he had been found by the Giver of meaning. Yet always there was that other possibility. There is always the possibility in human life of that other state.

It is exactly because the biblical faith sets our salvation realistically over against life in that other dimension of meaninglessness that it speaks relevantly to every generation. In our existence there is always that from which we need to be saved. Exactly because our lives are fearfully anxious and hopeless, anguished and hapless, there is the Voice that *can* speak to us the word we need to hear; the Body and the Blood that are given indeed for us; the Love that can reach out to us and save us from the self-love that eventuates in spectral doom.

Essentially our human situation is what it is because of the freedom with which the Creator has endowed us. Old-fashioned agnostics used to say that it could not have been a very intelligent kind of deity who fashioned a world in which there could be so much human misery and tragedy. When they scoffed thus at orthodox faith they did not realize what they were actually saying. What they were really suggesting was that God should have made people in such a way that they could have immediate felicity like the first people in the Garden of Eden. But the whole point of Eden was the creation of persons in freedom. Adam and Eve had to choose. Had they not been able to choose, they would have been mere puppets.

Sometimes modern man dreams of the sort of deliverance from his wasteland which will give him security by fiat. He yearns for an authoritarian voice that will speak a law. For the law, perchance, might be a return to the primordial womb, where meaning is provided from the protecting organism and where one does not have to think, or weigh, or drift, or choose.

In his poem, "The Man at Mid-Century," Winfield Townley Scott writes:

> "We cannot guess how long he'll wait.
> He paces in his room alone
> Imagining someone must come
> Whose voice will force the lag of fate. . . .
>
> Pacing he waits for me or you
> Or anyone to speak his name:
> Someone to tell him what to do
> Someone to tell him what to think
> Someone to tell him what to feel."[2]

If the word came that way, nothingness would be overcome; but it would come at the expense of personhood. All the totalitarian regimes of past or present warn us that this would never do. If the answer to chaos is some absolute word of another man, whether dictator, priest, or any exterior law, then we should find meaning of a sort, but it, too, would turn out in the end to be meaninglessness. St. Paul experienced release from that kind of law; and our Lord died on Calvary because of several human absolutes that were attempting to provide the keystone of an allegedly well-regulated society. Christians cannot sanction meaning superimposed from any *human* source. God created us in freedom. The answer to the ever-possible nothingness that we potentially might be choosing for ourselves is a free choice on our part to receive his personal Word which alone can keep us truly human. That is never coerced, save by the power of invincible, self-giving love.

The probability is that there are not many people who are content with nothingness as an ultimate verdict on life. Mr. Samuel Beckett wrote a novel in 1946 called *Watt*. "What distressed Watt," Beckett wrote, "was not so much that he did not know what had happened, for he did not care what had happened, as that nothing had happened; a thing that was nothing had happened." Mr. Brooks Atkinson remarked in the *New York Times* (January 31, 1960) that characteristically Beckett's persons "do not rebel against

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[2] From *Scrimshaw* by Winfield Townley Scott, © 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1959 by Winfield Townley Scott. Used by permission of The Macmillan Company.

the hopelessness of their environment. They are resigned to their position as counters in an apathetic game played at their expense by a force that is not concerned about them. Nothingness is a positive force in their lives."

That line of Mr. Atkinson's indicates perhaps the one hope for the victims of nothingness. They still need some positive force by which to live. Thus many almost personify that which is basically incapable of having personal power — the nothingness itself. Is not this very need for *some* meaning to live by, even if it be the meaning of meaninglessness, the fertile ground into which the seeds of Christian witness can be sown in our time?

For the Christian gospel speaks to all of us at exactly the point where we are. It points to the City of God, but always remembers that mankind lives in Sodoms and Gomorrahs or, at best, very imperfect Jerusalems. It promises a new heaven and a new earth in the end, but only for persons who have lived in the first earth. Its Lord is one who in his own flesh knew the desolation of direst defeat. His Body on earth is the company of faithful witnesses, who, being themselves vulnerable to what Mr. Atkinson has called "the surly indifference of the barren world," speak to that very world his living Word.

THE MOURNERS BENCH

By G. Hobab Kish

YOU may have heard of the old Scottish lady who referred to a young man as obviously fitted for the ministry, because he was "a right harmless laddie." I do not know of a more devastating thing to say about preachers and pastors. Call them egotists, for many of us are. Refer to them as troublemakers, because many of us must plead guilty to that charge. Brand them as men lacking in proper respect for the successful and powerful, for this is an attitude that breaks above the surface every now and then. But may the good Lord forbid that man looking at us should say, "Harmless"!

Yet for many a layman this is the picture of the ideal minister. He must be "spiritual," by which is meant otherworldly. He must be willing to run errands and do whatever the church cannot get anybody else to do. He must speak of matters so esoteric and general that no man will be stabbed in his conscience or troubled in his mind. Let preachers believe that all is well while the practical men go on about their business. The minister cannot do any harm at a wedding or a funeral, and if he can tell some pretty good stories after dinner for free, that will be fine.

But even sadder than this distorted picture of some laymen is the image too many preachers have of themselves. We begin to think of ourselves as "right harmless laddies." I have listened to cheap entertainment by preachers, priests and rabbis who long ago lost all sense of speaking for God and men. Having eased the tension of the discipline, they became commercial men with one eye on profit and the other on safety. Jerome gave us the right word for such creatures: "Shun, as you would the plague, a cleric who from being poor has become wealthy, or who, from being a nobody has become a celebrity." Let all the people respond, "Amen!"

Now the New Testament has a great respect and fear of the Word. It has no comfort for the preachers whose cozy little talks pass for sermons. The Bible never thought of religion as harmless. Listen to *The Letter to the Hebrews:*

> "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (4:12-13).

Until a man recognizes that he is dealing with something that can turn the world upside down, he is not worthy of the Christian ministry.

A doctor reports that when he was an assistant to a great professor of therapeutics he heard him say many times, "If you are told that a medicine is harmless, you may take it that it also lacks any healing properties." And that is a good word for a drug-addicted generation. All the talk about all the medicines and pills which can cure you without any danger of hurting you is false. To study medicine is to learn how to take calculated risks.

It is sad news for the boys who are only comfort dispensers to learn that too much comfort can kill a man. If what I say next Sunday morning cannot possibly hurt anyone, it cannot help anyone either. Remember, we wield a two-edged sword with sharp edges. We are not little boys playing with wooden ones.

NOTICE

In the future sermons and articles submitted for publication in The Pulpit will be returned only if they are accompanied by postage and a self-addressed envelope. The number of sermons and articles now received by The Pulpit and the time required for their return make this change in policy necessary.

Religion

By Charles B. Tupper

The following statement was written at the request of the Drake Times-Delphic, student publication of Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa. It was one of a series dealing with probable emphases in the various disciplines of the University.

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OF necessity, this is a purely personal statement, for surely one would be both unwise and inadequate to write representatively on such a subject: "Religion in the Next Ten Years."

Religion gets itself entangled with all of life. There are involvements, implications and concerns in religion which make it as comprehensive as all of human experience — past, present, future. "He never knows England who only England knows." Similarly, one never knows religion who only religion knows.

But, to become more specific, there are suggestions concerning directions of movement, probable emphases which will be characteristic of religion in the next decade. The suggestions, inevitably, will betray personal bias tinged with a generous measure of hope.

I

The walls which separate denominations will continue to crumble and the ones which remain will assume a different alignment. Evidences are to be seen in (1) the mobility of populations with easy transfer from one denomination to another; (2) lessening emphasis upon denominational peculiarities, and increasing stress on the basic, inherent values of religion; (3) comity agreements which seek to determine co-operatively the placement and care of new congregations; (4) union movements both within denominations and across denominational lines; (5) the tentative overtures of the Roman Catholic Church for preliminary conversations with others of different faith; (6) the virile, widespread ecumenical activity and achievement. The divisive distinctions which persist will be found in new alignments which are not so much denominational as theological, that is, liberal as contrasted with conservative.

II

Religion will become creative in relation to culture and judgmental with reference to it rather than to continue as a dull reflection of contemporary secular life. Persons rather than things will rise to a position of primary value. The church will have definite status not primarily for large membership, ornate buildings, real estate holdings or feverish internal activity, but because of its transforming thrust into all areas of life where human beings are handicapped or hurt, and will seek to extend opportunities for fullest development until they are coextensive with the human race.

Increased emphasis will be placed upon the application of profoundly religious principles and attitudes in vocations. This will tend to eliminate the deadly dichotomy which exists when one worships God on Sunday only in the sanctuary and lives as a pagan the rest of the week. Religion is not a pleasant, optional additive or accessory which is nice to have if one is so inclined. It is inherent in life itself, and personality is less than its best without it. For individuals or society to transgress practices which enhance the worth of persons is not simply sinful, it is rankly stupid as well. In this concept of vocation the church is at its best not in ceaseless internal activity, but as an oasis in a desert to which weary, baffled, discouraged, sinful, eager people come for refreshment, renewal, forgiveness, perspective, guidance, courage, resources, in order that they may return to daily tasks in the confidence that it is in God "they live and move and have their being" *every* day.

Institutional religion may decline numerically when its intrinsic nature is more clearly understood. It does not purport to provide its adherents a paid-up membership in the country club, nor an exclusive coterie of congenial bridge partners, nor even an authentic passport to eternal bliss. Rather it insists that goodness is permanent and there is that in the structure of the universe which is on the side of human beings, even though to secure it may lead through some hell of discipline and suffering and temporary defeat. In fact, earth's greatest soul discovered that commitment and loyalty to the welfare of persons led up a hill called Calvary. And there they crucified him, but not until he had looked into the face of the One whose love was his constraint saying, "I did not quit. I finished the work you gave me to do. Into thy hands I commend my spirit." It is conceivable if that outcome is made clear some may drop away. However, I predict that the courageous, venturesome ones will say, "Count me in on *that*."

CHARLES B. TUPPER *was professor of applied Christianity at Drake Divinity School, Des Moines, Iowa from 1951 until his retirement in 1960. A graduate of Drake University and the University of Chicago Divinity School, Dr. Tupper has served 37 years in the pastoral ministry of the Disciples of Christ and has held pastorates in South Dakota, Wisconsin, Colorado, Ohio and Illinois.*

Pulpit Calendar

Oct. 1 — World-Wide Communion Sunday.
Oct. 8 — 20th Sunday after Pentecost.
Oct. 15 — Laymen's Sunday.
Oct. 18 — Churchmen's Rally.
Oct. 22 — World Order Sunday.
Oct. 29 — Reformation Sunday; World Temperance Day.
Oct. 31 — Reformation Day.
Nov. 1 — All Saints' Day.
Nov. 2 — All Souls' Day.
Nov. 3 — World Community Day.
Nov. 5 — 24th Sunday after Pentecost.
Nov. 12 — Stewardship Day.
Nov. 19 — Thanksgiving Sunday.
Nov. 19-26 — Share-Our-Surplus Week.
Nov. 23 — Thanksgiving Day.
Dec. 3 — 1st Sunday in Advent.
Dec. 10 — Universal Bible Sunday; 2nd Sunday in Advent.
Dec. 17 — 3rd Sunday in Advent.
Dec. 24 — 4th Sunday in Advent; Christmas Eve.
Dec. 25 — Christmas.
Dec. 31 — New Year's Eve.

Sermon Resources

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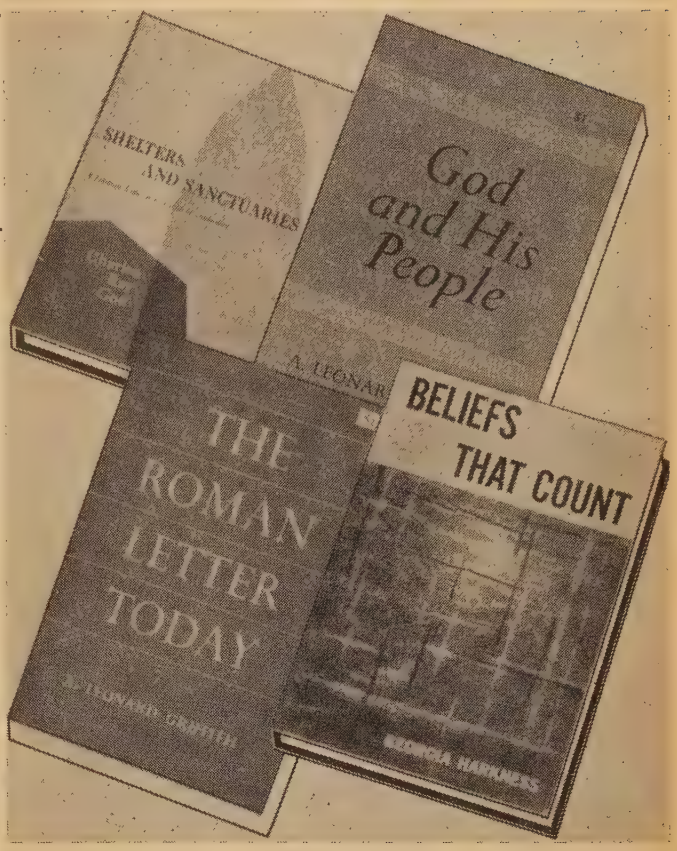

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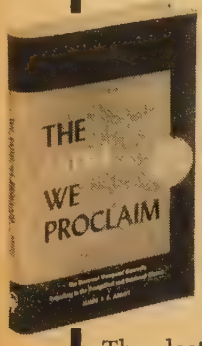

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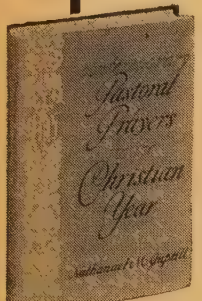

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Book Reviews

JAPANESE CONTRIBUTIONS TO CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY. *By Carl Michalson. Westminster. $3.95.*

PROTESTANT Christianity is only one hundred years old in Japan. . . . Yet of all the younger churches, it is apparently the first to have developed a significant theology." So states the author in the preface to this unique and meaningful study of modern Japanese religious thought.

On leave from his post as professor of systematic theology at Drew University, Dr. Michalson spent a semester as visiting lecturer at Tokyo Union Seminary, Aoyama Gakuin, and at other schools in Japan. At the same time, he set himself to learn as much as possible about the patterns of theological thought among those to whom he went as an interpreter of Western theological tendencies. Dr. Michalson returned to the United States convinced not only that Americans are wrong in assuming that Japan's Christian thinkers have been mere imitators but that, as one scholar from Tokyo recently said to Karl Barth, "Japan's theologians now stand on their own legs."

In this volume Dr. Michalson opens vistas to some of the distinctive schools of thought among Japan's leading theologians. One of these supports the doctrines current in the so-called Mu-Kyokai movement which maintains that a pure Christianity "loves God and man without [need for] the church, boasts no church edifices, no sacraments, no organization, and requires only the Bible and its thoughtful interpretation by those who desire to be Christian without ceasing to be Japanese."

At the other end of the spectrum of thought about the church is the teaching of such men as Zenda Watanabe that "there can be no intelligent study of the Bible outside the framework of the church." Yet it must be recalled that this was a church which was dynamic and creative in formulating the Scriptures and in changing the then-known world. To some Japanese theologians this concept of the church takes on a highly mystical character which is a far cry from Western rationalization and institutional formalism. There is a profound eschatological quality in such a view of the church. Yet, as emphasized by Yoshitaka Kumano, there is little of mere other-worldliness. To such interpreters Christian ethics must be "the eschatalogical dimension of community with God in Christ through the church, which supports an action in the world with ultimate meaning."

Perhaps the most typical of modern theological tendencies is developing around the thought of Kazoh Kitamori, commonly referred to as "The Theology of the Pain of God." This more clearly deals with the great concern of historic Buddhism with suffering, illness and death as vital realities than does any other present-day system of religious thought in Japan. It boldly asserts that "pain is in the essence of God." It posits pain, and even human pain, as the expression of God's wrath, apart from which no parent can deal creatively yet compassionately with his children. It is of course God's love which must ultimately triumph, but to quote both Kitamori and Michalson, "The atonement is not so much in the victory as in the conflict." This is of course not only to embrace pain, wrath and love in the very heart of God but to recognize that the outcome of the struggle cannot be assured in this world, and only in eternity by a far deeper understanding of both pain and love than Buddhist thought or even the average Christian apologist has ever comprehended.

More concerned with the positive implications of love in the Godhead is the thought of the late Seiichi Hatano. Perhaps more philosophical than theological, this school of thought is concerned with the metaphysical otherness of God which "provides the foundation that prevents human time from slipping into nothingness and death." Of interest to those who think as much with their hearts as with their heads in fathoming religious realities is Hatano's axiom that "the first step toward right understanding is experience," and this "involves taking a position from within some concrete religion." Hatano's thought also deals with suffering and death, as do all who have Buddhist blood in their veins; but he repudiates the idea of getting rid of life's ills by destruction of the self, and affirms the Christian outlook which relates the self to eternity conceived as "the Time of Love." Here there is a genuine sense of the eschatalogical which uses natural and cultural relationships chiefly as a means of integrating the self into the Time of Love as the dimension of the future. "The work of Hatano," says Michalson, "represents the highest level of intellectual maturity in Japanese theology today."

The significance of all this concern for Eastern along with Occidental landmarks in theology may not be immediately apparent to the typical Western Christian. There may be in this volume a too-ready willingness to accept one century of progress as qualifying Protestant theologians in Japan to speak authoritatively in areas of thought in which Western Christianity has had two millenia of intellectual gymnastics. But if Europeans and Americans are really aware of the part which Asia's

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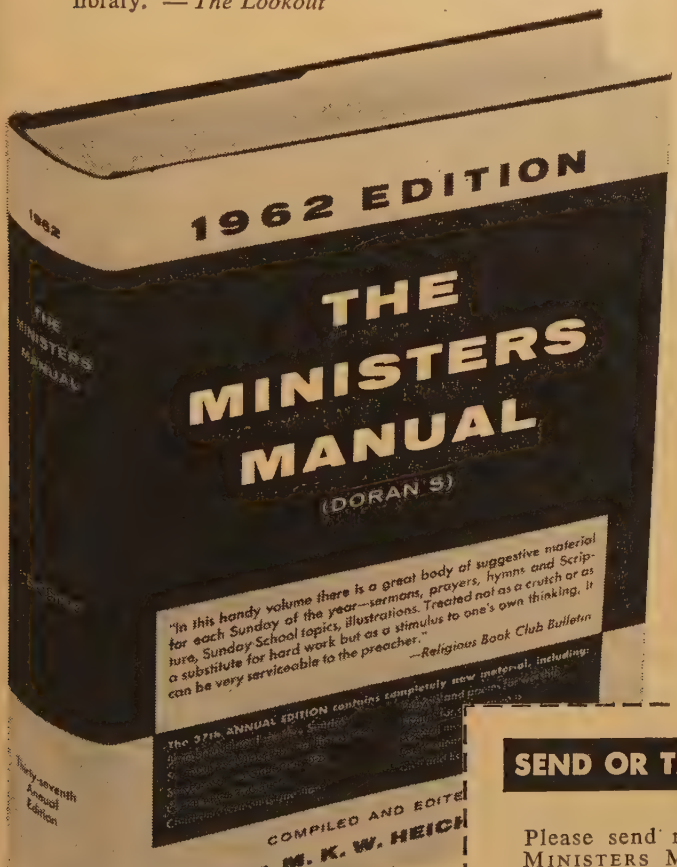
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life and thought for more than two thousand years will play in the world of tomorrow, the conclusions with which Dr. Michalson concludes his final chapter entitled "The Maturity of Japanese Theology" are imperative: "The theological mind of Japan has bridged the gap between Jerusalem, Rome, Wittenberg and Geneva on the one side, and Tokyo on the other. . . . If Christian history as an ecumenical actuality is to persist in the future, the West must take up its side of the theological partnership and converse with the East." — *Thoburn T. Brumbaugh, New Rochelle, N. Y.*

THE BOOK OF PSALMS. *By Arnold B. Rhodes. John Knox. $2.00.*

THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH: THE LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH. *By Howard Tillman Kuist. John Knox. $2.00.*

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES. *By Albert C. Winn. John Knox. $2.00.*

THE FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD LETTERS OF JOHN. THE LETTER OF JUDE. THE REVELATION TO JOHN. *By Julian Price Love. John Knox. $2.00.*

THE four volumes under review form the second installment of The Layman's Bible Commentary, a current project of John Knox Press under the general editorship of Balmer H. Kelly, Donald G. Miller, Arnold B. Rhodes, and Dwight M. Chalmers. The first installment, published October 1959, covered Genesis, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, and Jonah in the Old Testament, with Luke (Gospel), Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians in the New. Publication schedule calls for four volumes each October. (Four or more volumes — any assortment of titles — may be had for $1.75 each.)

The current installment contains commentaries on Psalms, Jeremiah, and Lamentations in the Old Testament, and Acts, 1, 2, and 3 John, Jude, and Revelation in the New. Its format — four boxed volumes, two for the O.T. and two for the N.T. — is similar to its predecessor. Each biblical book covered is given a general introduction, dealing with its purpose, date, authorship, etc., and an outline. Then comes the commentary proper, based upon the outline. Text is not included, except where quoted for illustration. Thus the reader will need his Bible beside him (preferably RSV).

Dr. Arnold B. Rhodes, who is professor of Old Testament at Louisville Presbyterian Seminary, does the volume on Psalms and is presumably a safe guide on critical questions. His treatment should surely go far to deepen Christian apprehension of these classics of devotion. I like in particular the many cross references which he gives to the New Testament, either in its use of this or that Psalm, or in some other relation.

The same feature is found, though perhaps not so extensively, in the volume on Jeremiah and Lamentations, by Dr. Howard T. Kuist, who is professor of biblical theology and English Bible at Princeton Seminary. Thus he says, for example:

> "But perhaps the most significant relations of all between this prophet [Jeremiah] and the New Testament are those which connect Jeremiah of Anathoth and Jesus of Nazareth. It is reported in the Gospel according to Matthew (16:13-14) that at Caesarea Philippi, when Jesus asks his disciples, 'Who do men say that the Son of man is?', they replied, 'Some say . . . Jeremiah.' The parallels between these two characters are striking. Both grew up in little country towns. Both loved the common people and wept over them. Each was opposed severely by the leaders of his day. . . ." (p. 24).

It is in the New Testament volumes that this reviewer finds himself on more familiar ground, at least as regards historical, literary, etc. matters. In the volume on Acts, Dr. Albert C. Winn, who is professor of doctrinal theology at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, tends toward a conservative critical position, as does indeed Dr. Julian Price Love in the volume on the Johannine Epistles, Jude, and Revelation. But this is perhaps all to the good in commentaries with the type of readership envisaged for those under consideration — especially as the commentators state the other positions as well. Certainly Dr. Winn's treatment of Acts will enable the reader not technically trained in

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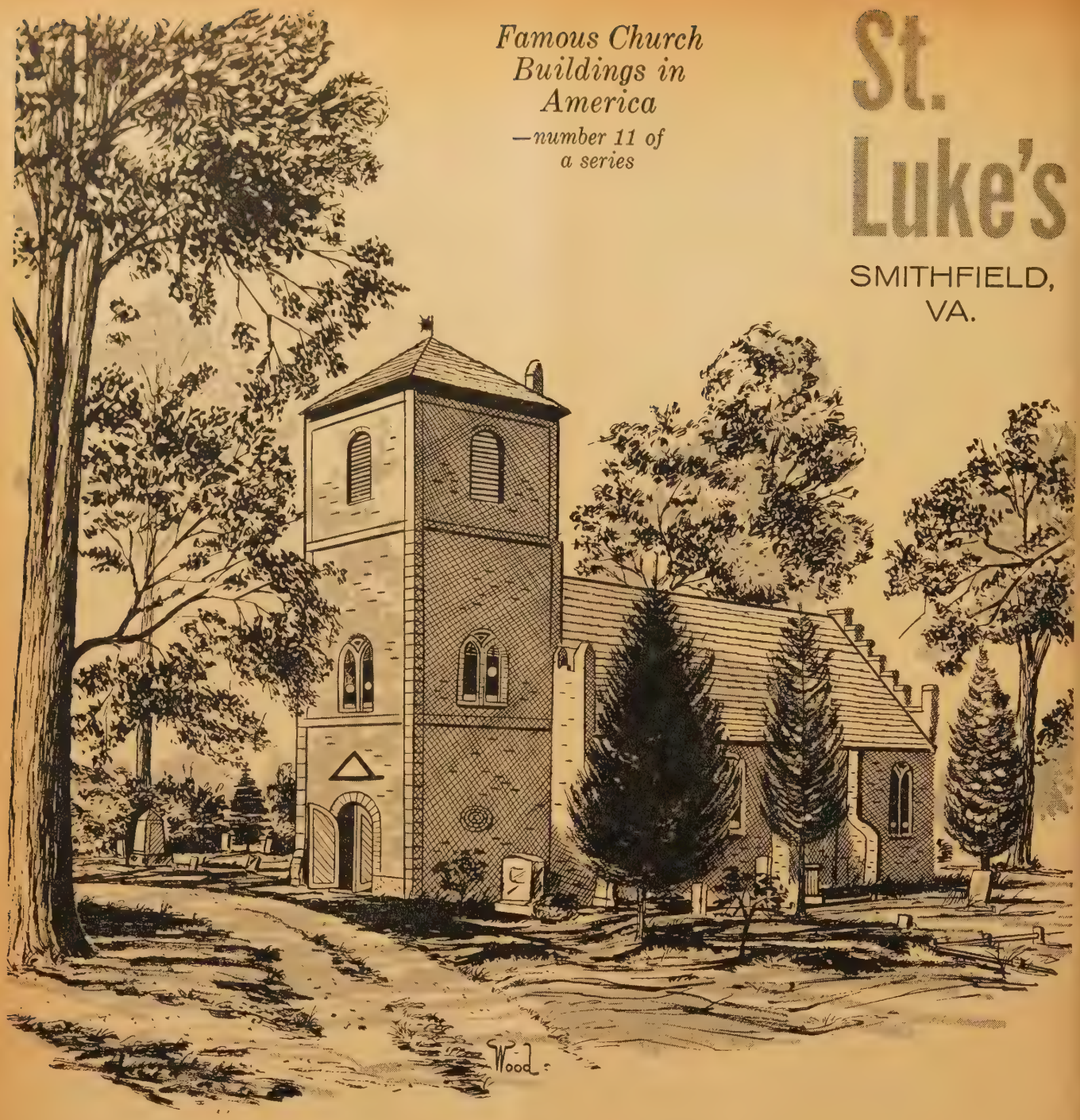

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Dr. Love, who for many years has been professor of biblical theology n Louisville Presbyterian Seminary, gives an especially fine popular treatment of Gnosticism in the volume for which he is responsible. I note one very minor error in this volume: "1600" is in my reckoning the square of four multiplied by the *square* (rather than the *cube)* of ten (p. 95).

These commentaries, used in conjunction with the biblical text itself, should go far toward presenting the Bible as living literature, with a message relevant to our own times, to the many today for whom it is little more than a closed book. While admirably designed for laymen, they need not be disdained by busy ministers feeling the need to brush up on their own knowledge of the Scriptures. — *Francis C. Lightbourn, Literary Editor,* The Living Church, *Milwaukee, Wis.*

LET'S LOOK AT PAUL. *By Eric H. Wahlstrom. Augustana. $1.50.*

PAUL'S MESSAGE AND MISSION. *By William Baird. Abingdon. $3.00.*

IN view of the number of Pauline studies already available, it would seem that any new book on the apostle must, if its publication is to be justified, either say something new or say something old unusually well. By this standard Abingdon is to be congratulated and Augustana gets our sympathy.

Wahlstrom's effort can be given short shrift. Apparently written with the local church study group in mind, it is a short (87 pages), exceedingly pedestrian account of the personality and teachings of Paul, with the emphasis upon personality. The book is wholly innocent of critical scholarship — no hint appears, for instance, that anyone has ever questioned the authorship of the pastorals. There are the usual Lutheran warnings against works-righteousness, but at no point is the conflict between grace and works analyzed in terms that make it relevant to the life of the church today. The style provokes an image of a professor self-consciously talking down to his class.

Baird's book — a revision of lectures delivered at Northwest Christian College, Eugene, Oregon — is in a wholly different class. If it does not present any new insights, it is at least an extremely useful and compact (167 pages) summary of current Pauline scholarship. Numerous footnotes document the author's extensive research. [By the way, cheers to a publisher that still puts notes at the bottom of the page!] The apostle's message is set in its historical context with the help of generous quotations from first-century literature. Baird argues convincingly for a "nonobjective" view of the Word. He understands the difference between the form in which the gospel is articulated and the gospel itself. To absolutize the propositional form is to be an idolater. From this standpoint he helpfully discusses the figures of speech employed by Paul. The relevance of Paul to the present age is made clear at every point in this study. The following quotation will help to give the flavor of Baird's approach:

> For Paul, man is saved by faith. It is extremely important, however, that the apostle's idea of man's response to God's act is not misunderstood. By "faith" Paul does not mean intellectual assent to certain facts or doctrines. Belief that certain facts or doctrines are reliable is really to put one's trust in one's own mental ability to verify the object of faith. It is obvious that such a belief in one's own intellectual achievement is not faith in God, and since the object of this pseudo faith is data which the little mind of man can evaluate, it appears that the concern of faith is with items of less significance than the mind itself. (p. 145)

This reviewer felt that the paradox between faith as the gift of God and faith as man's response could have been dealt with a bit more fully.

Excellent indices enhance the value of this book as a preacher's tool. It is not a substitute for more technical studies, but it is a most valuable compendium. The vocabulary employed puts it outside the grasp if not the reach of those for whom Wahlstrom evidently was writing. But many members of that popular abstraction known as "intelligent laymen" could read *Paul's Message and Mission* with great profit. Well done! — *Mayo Yates Smith, First Presbyterian Church, Winamac, Ind.*

NOT AS THE SCRIBES. *By John Middleton Murry. Edited by Alec R. Vidler. Horizon. $3.75.*

UNTIL his death, a few years ago, John Middleton Murry occupied a peculiar niche in the gallery of English letters. Critic, editor, author, sometime mystic, semisaint, debunker, idealist, lay preacher: he was a man of parts. In this book, *Not as the Scribes,* are gathered some of Middleton Murry's Sunday evening "sermons," once delivered to residents of "The Farm," an experiment in communal living founded by Murry. The sermons are well-wrought and often wise; they echo an era past when idealism was not indecent, and some eyes shone.

Murry was born a Unitarian but died a confirmed member of the Church of England: his faith fluttered between extremes. A child of the enlightenment, he was intrigued by orthodoxy, and obsessed with Christ; but never willing to wave aside the Uni-

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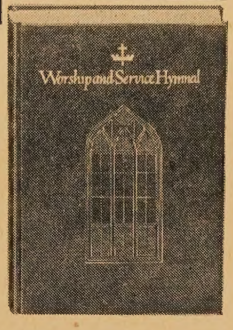

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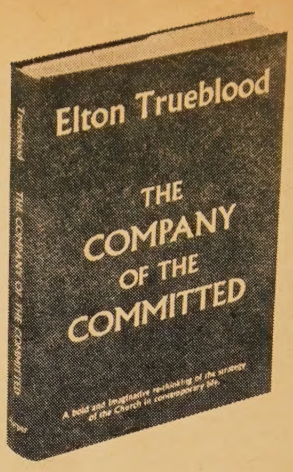
tarian untheology of his youth. The three score sermons in *Not as the Scribes* are published according to the Church Year, as also they were preached. They are not arranged chronologically so that occasionally they appear contradictory, even redundant. Still, the reader can trace Murry's authentic pilgrimage from the barren faith of his birth to deepened faith at his death.

G. K. Chesterton once accused Murry of limiting his concept of God to that which did not shock him. Chesterton was perceptive. There is little in this book to shock or stir the reader; but there is much that is sensitive and sincere, and much that is lovely here. In *Not as the Scribes* you are introduced to a gentleman, and a Christian idealist — both vanishing breeds. — *David G. Buttrick, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pa.*

RELIGION IN THE DEVELOPING PERSONALITY. *Academy of Religion and Mental Health. New York University Press. $3.00.*

THIS book has some interesting information on the influence of religion on personality development; some of it challenging, some stimulating, some instructive, but little that is definitive. The book is a report of the proceedings of the second Academy Symposium on Interdisciplinary Responsibility for Mental Health, of the Academy of Religion and Mental Health, held in 1958. Participants were nine outstanding psychiatrists; two nationally known psychologists; eight clergymen, all either concerned with or directly at work in the field of mental health; and five laymen, also noted for their interest in this field. Each session began with a more or less prepared presentation by one of the experts, with free discussion following. It would have been wonderful to have been present for such discussion, but the fact that you weren't there need not keep you from knowing exactly what was said, for it is all here, every word of it, reported, it seems, almost verbatim.

There is valuable information here, but only the determined student is going to dig it out and organize it. It is too bad that the foundation which made funds available for the conference and for the publication of this volume did not require that an editor make a book out of all this material before it was printed as such. There is need for discussion about mental health, to include clergymen, physicians and laymen, at local as well as national levels. A clear summary of the findings of a conference such as this one could provide the ground for similar seminars at the local level. Unfortunately, this book is not easily adaptable for this purpose. — *Joseph W. Baus, First Presbyterian Church, Evansville, Ind.*



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PULPIT POST

(Continued from page 2)

rightly say, is in God "Who sent a babe into a dark world." But Melville makes the same point eloquently in connection with virtue which remains not aloft but comes down (as did Christ) to "the deck," in *White Jacket.*

"Our hope is God who revealed Himself in a reviled man and used a shameful cross to save a sinful world." Yes, and Melville thus gives silent, enigmatic Vine the last "word" as he holds a plant called "Christ's thorn" in *Clarel,* the chapter on the Syrian Monk. We do not preach an "imbecile candle," as you say, but neither did Melville. And who would say, if Melville had been describing our own day of nuclear terror, that he had "deliberately expanded the waves" or "deepened the night"?

Our hope, you say, is in God "who rolled a stone and raised a Son and will yet make him King and keep to himself all who enter his kingdom." I agree. Such was the faith of Paul, and the Spirit of God will validate Paul's witness. We need not try to validate it by maligning the man who, late in his life, thus concluded an account of his pilgrimage to the Holy Land (in the Epilogue to *Clarel*):

> That like the crocus budding through the snow —
> That like a swimmer rising from the deep —
> That like a burning secret which doth go —
> Even from the bosom that would hoard and keep;
> Emerge thou mayst from the last whelming sea,
> And prove that death but routs life into victory.

I respectfully but truly doubt, sir, that Herman Melville "lost nerve, turned bitter and left behind an awesome cynicism. . . ."

JOSEPH J. LEMEN
First Presbyterian Church
Monett, Mo.

One of the Greatest

SIR: I have just received my July issue of the Pulpit in which Daniel C. Reuter has written one of the greatest articles you've ever printed — "A Young Minister's Dilemma."

As another "young" minister I have faced these same problems in the deep South, and hundreds more like me have faced them in all other parts of the United States. Perhaps Pastor Reuter might have taken the plight one step farther along the way by indicating that much of the resistance to young ministerial ideals is brought about by our district superintendents and bishops. At least that is the case in the Methodist Church. Along with the kindly advice of the "official board" comes the equally kindly advice of our "superiors" who represent the old guard of the church, and that advice is usually to follow the "catch 'em with honey" routine, setting aside those high-flying ideals that seminary and nonseminary graduates seem to espouse.

We don't have the answer either, but of one thing we are most certain. If we continue in the Christian community with this sort of approach to life, we, not our congregations, may well have to face the Master at the end of the earthly road and answer for the greatest sin of all — failing to be true, honest, fishers of men and yet having gone forth in his name and under his glorious banner.

ROBERT B. PINCKNEY
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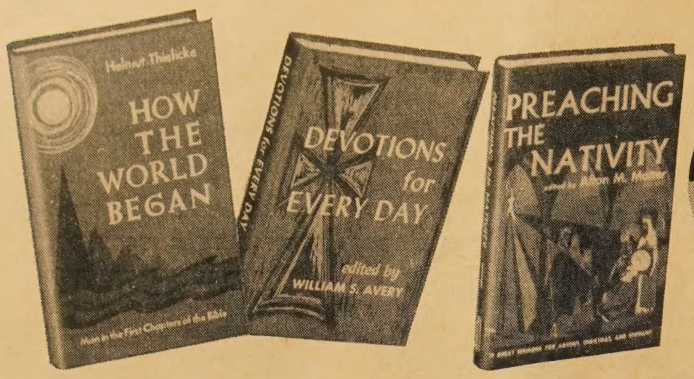

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